Resolution on the political situation in the Maldives

2004/2583(RSP) - 16/09/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted by 153 votes to 0 with 7 abstentions a resolution on the political situation in the Maldives.

The resolution had been tabled by the PES, EPP-ED, UEN, and ALDE groups.

Noting that President Gayoom uses imprisonment to suppress parliamentary democracy and that he is currently holding the leadership of the Maldives Democratic Party in prison, Parliament calls upon President Gayoom forthwith to repeal the state of emergency in the Maldives, guarantee the fundamental human rights of its citizens, and release the pro-democracy reformers he had arrested on 14 August 2004. It calls on the Government to press ahead with an open and thorough reform process, which will be the best way to ensure stability in the country.

Members recall that the Maldives has a special relationship with the EU and benefits from development assistance. Trade with the Maldives has increased, with imports from the Maldives into the EU reaching EUR 38 million in 2002. The Commission has made available a cooperation budget of EUR 2 million for the Maldives. Last year 106 451 Italians, 77 642 Germans and 71 440 Britons, not to mention visitors from other Member States, travelled to the Maldives unaware of the lack of respect shown by the Maldivian authorities for fundamental human rights and of the number of people who are detained without trial.

Accordingly, Parliament calls on the Council, the Commission, and Member States as appropriate:

- forthwith to cease all non-humanitarian aid to the Maldives and to impose an immediate travel ban in order to prevent members of the Government and other officials of the Maldives from entering the Member States of the EU;
- determine where Maldivian government funds are being banked overseas;
- issue thorough warnings about the Maldives' human rights record to all tourists planning to go to the country;
- initiate an official, longer term, EU educational programme whereby tourists are made aware of countries' human rights records when choosing their travel destinations and are warned of countries where these are not in accordance with internationally agreed standards.

Lastly, Parliament notes that the EU delegation which visited the islands was denied access to detainees, and it calls on the Government of the Maldives to give its authorisation for an EU delegation to meet the activists who demonstrated in support of democracy.